

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

7 April 1981

National Intelligence Officers

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT : Future of the Strategic Warning Staff (SWS)

The Warning Working Group met on 13 March 1981 to discuss the future of the Strategic Warning Staff (or its successor) with a view toward improving its contribution to the Intelligence Community and/or the Policy Community. Attendees at the meeting are listed in Attachment A.

1. The Group considered three papers: a sub-committee report which they had commissioned (Attachment B), and independent view by a consultant (Attachment C), and one reflecting the views of the Director, SWS (Attachment D).

2. In the course of the discussion, a three-part consensus emerged.

-- Emphasis of the Staff or its successor should be on management, both substantive and non-substantive. In the former case, the Staff should ensure that a complete range of the "right questions" are asked of the line production elements thus serving a challenge or conscience function without becoming a separate, competing analytical entity. On non-substantive issues, attention needs to be devoted to the areas of warning resources and planning.

-- The Group leaned toward putting less weight on the independence now embodied in the semi-autonomous state of the SWS and more on serving as a instrument of the NIO/W.

-- Location at either DIA or CIA Hqs. would be acceptable. Since the Staff is entirely dependent on analytical support from line production elements, location at [REDACTED] would not be satisfactory.

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3. Implementation of the points contained in the consensus would not be without risk. In a dissenting view, the Director, SWS, made the following arguments:

-- Reasonable alternative hypotheses explaining events of potentially major warning significance, when disseminated beyond the Intelligence Community, serve a useful purpose.

-- The existing Staff of [] professional and [] administrative personnel is fully employed in following situations likely to involve significant security interests of the United States, especially where US-USSR confrontation might result. To broaden this mission, while at the same time reducing the number of people, would be counter-productive.

-- A semi-autonomous Staff under the general supervision of the NIO/W could provide the directed analytic support necessary to insure that all reasonable interpretations of available evidence having important warning implications are investigated. At the same time, maintaining the Staff in a semi-autonomous status would free the NIO/W from substantive controversy within the Community that might compromise his efforts in coordination of the overall community warning effort.

-- The Staff's experience suggests that, should it no longer be involved in publishing as a separate entity, it is likely to become simply another current intelligence organization, but one that is unheard. Therefore, the SWS recommendation is to maintain an autonomous entity like the SWS, or if that is unacceptable, abolish the SWS, create no follow-on entity, and return the scarce analyst assets to the parent intelligence organization.

4. Notwithstanding the risks expressed in Paragraph 3 above, the Warning Working Group recommends the following:

a. Abolish the SWS.

b. Expand the NIO/W staff at Langley [] professionals and [] administrative aide for a

total, counting the NIO/W and A/NIO/W, of []

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c. Restructure the NIO/W staff's mission to emphasize both substantive and non-substantive management.

d. Rely on occasional issuances by the NIO/W to supplant those of the SWS, restricting normal distribution to the Intelligence Community, but giving the NIO/W discretion to include the Policy Community when he sees fit.

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[]
Richard Lehman

Attachments

Attachment A
Attachment B
Attachment C (SC 08203-81)
Attachment D

This memo can be downgraded
to CONFIDENTIAL when separated
from attachments.

SUBJECT: Future of the Strategic Warning Staff (SWS)

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7 April 1981

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ATTACHMENT A

Warning Working Group Meeting

13 March 1981

Attendees

Richard Lehman, NIO/W - Chairman

25X1 [redacted] DIA
[redacted] DIA

Richard J. Kerr, CIA

Robert A. Martin, State/INR

25X1 [redacted] NSA

Peter C. Oleson, DoD

25X1 [redacted] CTS

25X1 [redacted], RMS
[redacted] SWS

25X1 [redacted], A/NIO/W

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